

# Nature Journaling Guiding Principles

*Nature Journaling is a way of collecting and organizing observations, questions, connections, experiences, and explanations using pictures, words, and numbers. It is intended to be creative, expressive, playful, and a personal practice that grows over time. It helps you foster curiosity, discover, think, remember, and integrate new information with existing knowledge.*

## I Notice...

Begin by noticing all that you can. Describe how it looks, what it does, and where it lives. Pay attention to little details and the big picture. Write these details down or communicate it in another way.

## I Wonder...

Ask questions about your observations, use that list to come up with even more questions

- Who: Identify what you're looking at or listening to. Who is it? Who was it?
- What: Identify the process you may be observing. What happened? What is happening? What will happen next? What does it do? What causes this?
- Where: Identify the space and location. Where is it? Where was it?
- When: Identify timing. When it did happen? When will it happen? How long will it stay underwater? When does the migration start/end? When do the birds begin to sing each morning?
- How: What is the structure, function, and/or process? How does it work? What are the parts? How do they work together?
- Why: What is the purpose of the thing? Why did it happen? What events led to this outcome?

## It Reminds me of...

Make connections and comparisons between what you observe now and things you have seen learned, or felt before.

What does this remind me of? How is this similar? How is it different?

## Could it be...

Try to figure out the answers to your questions. Make your own explanations and include evidence. You can always add explanations to your journal afterward when you've found answers! Use words, pictures, and number to show your ideas and explanations.

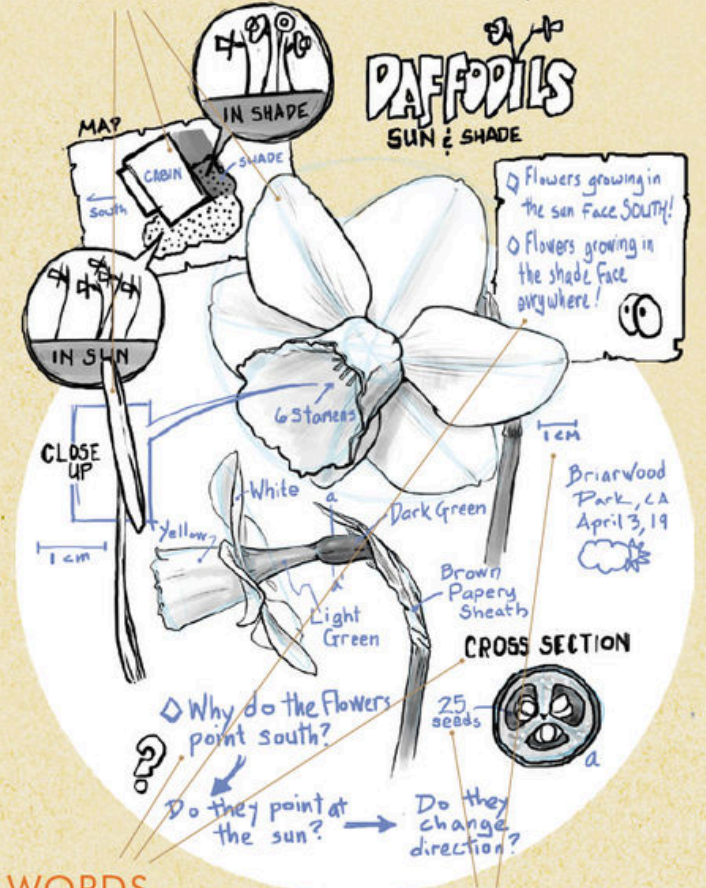
"Maybe the bird keeps going to that tree because it has a nest there... my evidence is that I can see it carrying insects to the tree"

To learn more: Download "How to Teach Nature Journaling" by John Muir Laws and Emilie Lygren for free!

## Use pictures, words, and numbers while journaling

### PICTURES

Make fast sketches and simple diagrams; draw the same object from different angles; create maps, cross sections, storyboard sequences, and close ups; zoom out for the big picture. Connect related items with frames, arrows, and divider lines. Use icons to add emphasis.



### WORDS

Use labels, bullet points, lists, sentence fragments, and full paragraphs all on the same page. Change your fonts and writing style to create titles, headings, and to add emphasis. Record the date, location, weather, time, or any other relevant context.

### NUMBERS

Count, measure, and time. If you can not count, estimate. Show scale on maps and drawings. Take more than one measurement to try to get more accurate data. Create tables and graphs to help you track and visualize your data.

From John Muir Laws, "How to Teach Nature Journaling"

## Be Creative

There are no rules in nature journaling! Focus on connecting to the world around you and expanding your capacity for expressing yourself. Work on developing a growth-mindset through the process. Learning new things is challenging, remember that when you learn something new, your brain grows! Allow yourself to slow down, pay attention, and experience awe, wonder, and connection with nature.